

LARGEST WEEKLY CIRCULATION IN THE HAMPTONS PLUS SPECIAL MANHATTAN DELIVERY

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HEALTH, BEAUTY & FITNESS

Skin deep with Samantha Altea

Spring has sprung, or at least that's the rumor. This year, I, for one, am loving most of what I'm seeing, but in order to get a handle on the inside track I went straight to our favorite fashion designer/personal style consultant, Pamela Bouchard. One chat with Pamela and I was drooling, checking the weather forecast by the hour (for soaring temps) and rushing to book my ticket for fashion avenue.

Spring is the "to be continued," time, she told me. It's a new twist on some old favorite looks that we've all worn and loved. Pamela says that spring offers an evolution of years gone by, rehashing last year's trends, but with the addition of new pieces that stretch it all just a little bit further. This spring, designers don't want to scare us with anything dangerously new, or boringly old. Instead, '05 offers reassurance, a comfortable feeling as well as an exciting trip around the world.

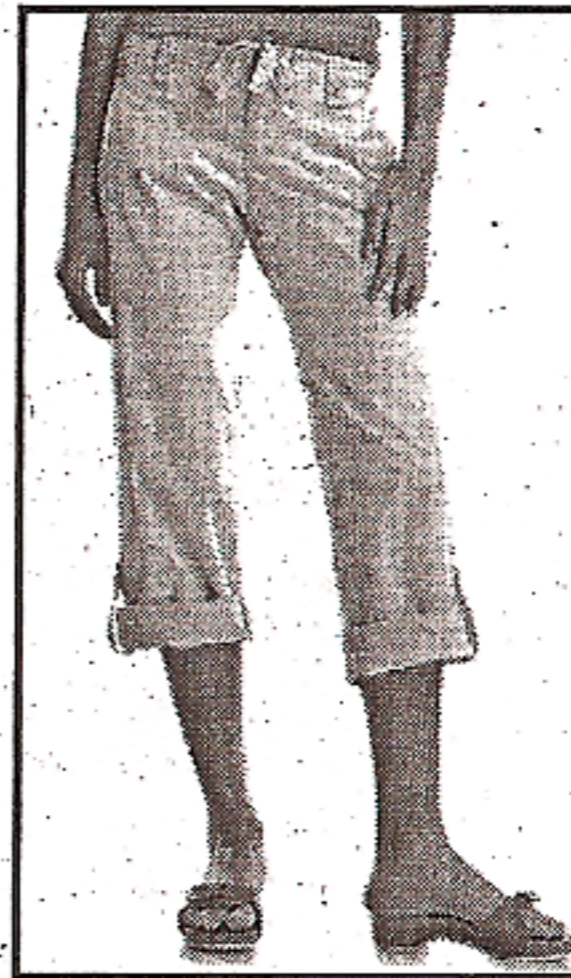
The mantra for spring is world travel. But no need to fly away, because most collections right here have gone global, showing influences from countries like Morocco, Africa, Asia, India and Greece. The look isn't purely ethnic, however; it's more about combining ethnic elements with familiar components, ones that we are very familiar with, but adding a wonderful new twist.

The first big item is the jacket. Trenches, in all lengths, are a must and look great paired with a hot crop pant. Like last season, the fitted crop jacket is also a big influence. So that crop tweed jacket we all loved in winter and fall also makes its way into spring, but in lighter, brighter colors and fabrics. Get your

hands on a hot new item, the safari jacket, combine it with other key elements, like denim, or white pants and you won't actually look like you're "on safari," honest. Crop pants are still huge, but this year, we're also seeing big cuffs on the pant. Denim, with a big, cropped, rolled cuff at many an ankle and pants in all lengths, even to right under the knee cap are some new choices.

White and denim are the new black for spring and summer, with white as one of the biggest influences of the season. But there's also a lot of floral and animal print. Feminine chiffon and lightweight cottons give that crisp clean and romantic look we all know, but we'll see them with unusual new twists on accessories. Like a chunky, hard, casual belt coupled with lightweight cotton. The season is about mixing soft with hard. Sturdy belts on delicate dresses lend toughness to a super feminine look.

Whilst on your travels, you might also like to stop off in Asia, because east meets west this spring, too. Feel free to mix Asian inspired clothing with familiar favorite pieces. Skins, from zebra to leopard, and jungle foliage, from delicate posies to bold blossoms, influence prints. Brightly colored optimistic flower prints stand alone, but can also be clashed - mix stripes with flowers and even prints. Many items are bejeweled, from knit tops to Moroccan inspired tunic tops with embellishments around the neckline.



The empire waist top, or dress, flatters most shapes and draws inspiration from Greece and you'll see a lot of it, adds Pamela. It's an easy to wear staple that looks great. The bohemian look is also back, but not in a flower child hippy kind of way, it's more of an urban gypsy look with a Latin influence, and the gypsy/Spanish skirt is a key item for spring. But team it with a structured shirt or crop safari jacket for a fresh look.

Accessories are just as fun and eclectic. Shoes are reaching new heights, so don't even think about stepping foot without a wedge sandal. Flat-soled lace up sandals, even ornamented flatties will be a must, too. Bags have turned into the ultimate

accessory of self-expression. So go bright, beautiful and bold this year. Bags in all varieties compliment the influences in clothes from a trot around the globe. Bangles are a must have accessory, as well as lengths of beads. Layer chunky bangles, big strands of chunky jewelry and long pendants. The more strands the better. Y necklaces are also statement pieces. Scarves and accessories around the face replace heavy make-up and hair-bands tame sleepy head, bohemian looking hair.

Stamp your fashion passport as much as you like this season. Next stop, spring make-up...next week.

Pamela Bouchard is Personal Style consultant. For an appointment with her call 212-493-8040 or e-mail dressingroom@nyc.rr.com

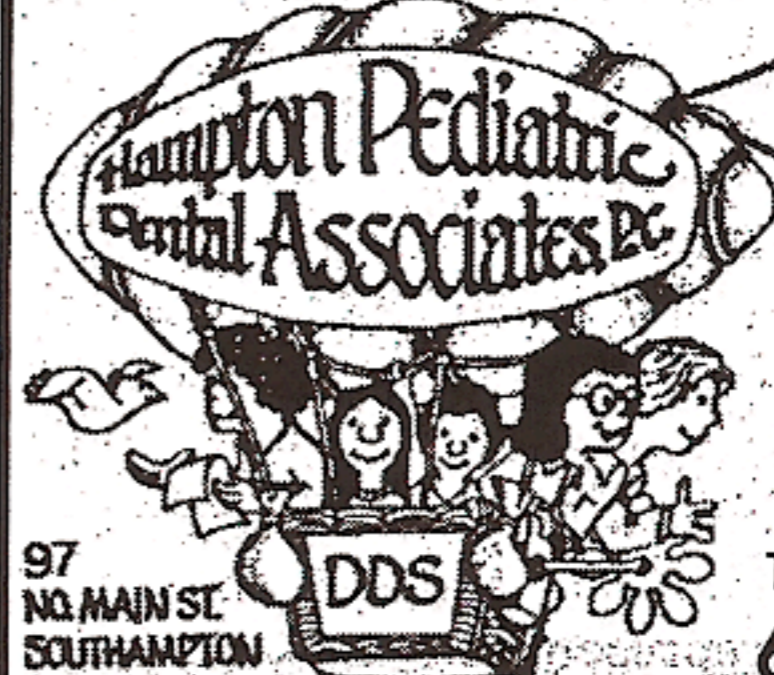
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